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Sandra Deshors, Sandra Götz and **Samantha Laporte** (eds.). *Rethinking linguistic creativity in non-native Englishes* (Benjamins Current Topics). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 2018. 223 pp. ISBN 9-789-02720146-1. Reviewed by **Lena Zipp**, University of Zurich.

Under the umbrella term of linguistic creativity, this volume brings together research on linguistic innovations – ”deviation[s] of a linguistic pattern from a native norm” (p. 2) – across different types of non-native Englishes. It centers around the ideological dichotomy of classifying non-standard forms as error in learner varieties but as innovation with the potential of developing into an established (if minority) form in second language varieties, raising both theoretical and methodological questions as to the validity of their status within the systems they emerge in, and the processes or social structures that ascertain their survival. Deshors, Götz and Laporte call once more to close the paradigm gap between the research fields of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). They claim that the “main differences between the two Englishes do not lie in the formal realization of innovations, as they seem to be quite similar in EFL and ESL. Rather, those differences emerge in both the interpretation and the perception of these linguistic innovations” (p. 15). The contributions in this book thus invite the reader to explore linguistic innovations in the continuum between and within different variety types of English.

The volume consists of an introduction and eight research articles with a clear orientation towards corpus-linguistic methodology (owing to their origin as contributions to an ICAME pre-conference workshop and previous joint publication as a special issue of *International Journal of Learner Corpora Research*). The articles treat both a wide range of national varieties and a diverse set of variety combinations, and give rise to a multitude of methodological and theoretical implications. With this combination of theoretical breadth on the one hand, and the quite specific concept of linguistic innovation on the other, the volume is an exciting and most timely addition to the canon of research in learner and World Englishes.

The editors' eponymous introduction situates the book within recent scholarship on the rapprochement of research paradigms, and provides the theoretical groundwork for the subsequent articles. It explores the topic of linguistic innovations in EFL and ESL from a variety of angles: a) delineating and defining the notions of (learner) error versus creative use, b) recommending corpus linguistic methodology to capture innovations, c) explaining emergence and conventionalization of innovations, and d) highlighting structural versus ideological distinctions between errors and innovations. In essence, the editors advocate a descriptive approach to both learner and second language (L2) varieties on the matter of linguistic creativity, before taking the inevitably ideological next step of interpreting structures as 'deviation' versus 'mis-use', or 'nativization' versus 'identity construction' according to one or the other paradigm. Ultimately, they work "[t]owards a recognition of EFL users as innovative L2 speakers" (p. 4).

In the first paper, Christopher Koch, Claudia Lange and Sven Leuckert investigate the 'intrusive *as*' construction (e.g. *call something as*) across South Asian varieties of English and Learner Englishes. The construction is introduced as a "staple topic of the Indian English complaint tradition" (p. 21), which aptly characterizes its apparent undecided status between "common error" and "truly pan-South Asian feature" (p. 22) in the Indian English speech community. Based on the *South Asian Varieties of English Corpus* (SAVE), the *International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE), and the *International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English* (ICNALE), the authors find 'intrusive *as'* in about 12 per cent of potential environments for the six most prolific verb lemmas (*call, declare, deem, dub, name* and *term*) in the ESL data, but with widely differing frequencies across the varieties of Learner Englishes. In spite of this inconclusive quantitative result, they are able to identify redundancy as a motivating factor for the use of the construction in both types of data, a factor that enhances ease of processing in production and perception. This justifies the comparison; it also highlights that actuation and propagation of innovations are best considered two separate processes: "The same creative processes and cognitive mechanisms may have radically different outcomes in the long run, solely depending on sociolinguistic factors" (p. 42).

Gerold Schneider and Gaëtanelle Gilquin propose a method to use collocation analysis to detect 'verb/adjective + preposition combinations' in a parsed version of the ICLE. The method can automatically extract "a large number of patterns distinctive for EFL and/or ESL" (p. 71) from parsed corpora, which makes great headway toward the possibility of data-driven research into collocational creativity and productivity. In their qualitative analysis, the authors discuss analogy as a cognitive process that sparks a particular type of linguistic

innovation and suggest that "ESL may prefer grammatical analogies, while EFL may overuse spatial and directional analogies" (p. 71). They conclude that analogy-based combinations are more likely to be recognized as innovations than those that can be traced back to L1 transfer.

In the third article, Bertus van Rooy and Haidee Kruger follow the development and stabilization of the innovative use of the progressive form in Black South African English (BSAfE). An extension of uses of the progressive has been observed for ESL but not for EFL varieties; in the case of BSAfE this is the extension of the progressive to both stative verbs and habitual contexts (as well as the less pervasive copula omission before progressives). The occurrence of these uses in BSAfE is associated with lower English proficiency, inciting the authors to ask how some innovations gradually disappear along with the speakers' rising proficiency levels, whereas others become conventionalized. Based on a corpus analysis of academic texts written by authors in different stages of academic advancement, the authors claim that innovations in ESL varieties arise as typical learner features in the early stages of language acquisition, only to be filtered out by normative interventions from the educational system if they are sufficiently frequent, respectively salient. Thus, in "an environment where English is used extensively as spoken language, and where published texts are produced locally, the chances for some innovations to be reinforced and become conventionalized are […] higher than in typical L[earner] E[nglishes] settings" (p. 96).

Marcus Callies' paper adopts a process-oriented approach to comparing lexical innovations in EFL and ESL varieties, based on parts of the ICLE and *International Corpus of English* (ICE). The author analyses non-standard applications of derivational morphology (prefixation; verbal, nominal abstract, and adjectival suffixation), and finds that they fall into the two categories of "interlingual, L1-based innovations" and "intralingual, L2-based innovations" (p. 99). He observes that the former type is restricted to EFL data, whereas the latter can be found in both ESL and EFL data, particularly based on the three processes of (over-)regularization, overaffixation and backformation: "it appears that there is now increasing evidence for the view that cognitively motivated processes to maximize transparency and explicitness are at play in EFL and ESL varieties" (p. 117).

The paper by Alison Edwards and Rutger-Jan Lange puts academic phraseology to the test in written academic corpus data from a selection of first language and second language varieties (ICE corpora) as well as the *Corpus of Dutch English* (NL-CE) as a learner variety. However, their bottom-up analysis of three-word clusters, or 3-grams does not reveal any structural distinctions

between the ESL and EFL varieties (such as the hypothesized restricted range of types and reliance on high-frequency 3-grams for EFL, or wider variety and structural innovation for ESL data). Innovation in the use of 3-grams is nevertheless revealed in the final qualitative discussion, and includes "the tendency towards (i) variable modal usage, such as the use of *can* or *could* (rather than just *may*) with *due to the*, (ii) the use of an additional hedging word such as *perhaps* alongside modals, and (iii) the use of an additional contrast maker [sic] like *yet* or *while* in conjunction with *on the other hand*." (p. 140). These innovations are common to both ESL and EFL data, but the authors caution against overgeneralizing results with a view towards intra-corpus variation at the level of individual authors, as this "has important implications for distinguishing between individual error and stable innovation" (p. 142): As such, high individual variation could at most be argued to represent a speech community in mid-change rather than stable innovation, but some author-based idiosyncrasies are best interpreted as a learner strategy of latching "onto particular phraseological crutches to compensate for the absence of more varied linguistic resources" (p. 142), also known as the 'teddy bear' effect (Hasselgren 1994).

Stephanie Horch's analysis of innovative verb-to-noun conversions in the Singapore and Hong Kong parts of the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE) exposes the effects of different degrees of institutionalization on the two ESL varieties, and ultimately "questions the established notion of ESL in general" (p. 147). With regard to transfer-based innovation in verb-to-noun conversions, the less institutionalized variety of Hong Kong English "shows trends and processes typical of acquisition settings, such as […] a stronger preference for the less complex word-formation process in general, so that it can be assumed that ESL varieties located at an early stage […] are similar to learner varieties" (p. 165). The author therefore calls for an integrated approach to ESL, EFL, and first language varieties.

The paper by Anna Rosen traces the fate of linguistic innovations in the former second language variety of Jersey English vis-à-vis its diachronic sister variety, French learner English (based on the French part of the *Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage*, LINDSEI-FR). The apparent-time Jersey data stems from sociolinguistic interviews (*Jersey Interview Corpus* JIC) and oral history projects (*Jersey Archive Corpus* JAC), and gives – together with the final contribution in this volume – most welcome precedence to 'fresh' spoken data for the study of seven contact-induced innovations in Jersey English. While there are close parallels to the continental French learner variety with regard to the linguistic structures, Rosen states that "it is only in retrospect that we can identify a feature as an innovation proper, i.e. once it has been

accepted within the speech community and become conventionalized" (p. 186). The author thus claims that linguistic factors, such as the extent of norm-deviation or intelligibility, play a lesser role for the survival of features that later become identity markers. Instead, the explanation lies "in an intricate web of social aspects, attitudes, feature awareness and norm-orientations" (p. 188). In order to be able to study these successfully, we need rich, annotated data from early stages in the formation of ESL and EFL varieties together with pragmatic data from accessibility, awareness, and intelligibility studies.

The last paper of the volume investigates linguistic innovation in a corpus of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) Skype conversations from the *Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (CASE). After a combination of data-driven methods to source innovations, Marie-Louise Brunner, Stefan Diemer and Selina Schmidt find that their results fall into three types of functionally accepted, innovative non-standard forms: 'L1 influence', 'approximations', and 'ad hoc innovations', some of which are strategies shared by either EFL or ESL varieties. Their case study comes from the realm beyond the ideological debates of variety status, as ELF speakers "do neither attempt to create a separate variety, nor are they in a position to do so" (p. 216). However, it offers a fresh perspective on the role and relevance of the communicative situation as a contextual factor in the emergence and perception of linguistic innovation.

This book covers a broad territory regarding both the set of diverse linguistic variables and the different types of English varieties it treats. It provides compelling evidence for the similarities in the emergence of features and points towards a host of complex factors in the search for reasons for their propagation. The collection of articles also showcases an array of corpus-based methods, making a convincing case for the combination of pre-informed and bottom-up analysis in the study of low-frequency phenomena. In sum, the editors (and convenors of the original workshop) have to be commended on the selection of topics.

As a minor point of criticism, the volume might have benefitted from a more unified definition of 'innovation', with a view towards a distinction between 'creativity' (lack of generality and predictability) and 'productivity' (envisaged rule-governedness, e.g. Bauer 2001: 64–65). As it stands, the use of the term across the contributions ranges from innovation as "a feature of an individual mind" (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 2), e.g. in Horch, Callies, and Brunner et al., to a more conventionalized if still non-standardized feature with a certain degree of systematicity, e.g. in Schneider and Gilquin, van Rooy and Kruger, and Koch et al. Finally, while the thrust of this volume is clearly to afford EFL varieties the 'right to creativity', the question remains whether the bridging

effort should not also be explored in the opposite direction with similar rigour, namely in asking when minority ESL variants have to be classified as errors rather than innovations.

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